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ABSTRACT

A process of decision making and professional growth is described as a tool for refocusing on individual growth for professional development and redefining the relationship between professional development and organizational outcomes. Refocusing on individual professional growth is an intervention aimed at reconceptualizing the linking relationship between staff development and organizational outcomes. Six key concepts of the proposed intervention are discussed: (1) both individuals and organizations need a clear sense of purpose or mission; (2) individuals need to focus energy toward change and development to be more balanced and productive; (3) the relationship between individual development and organizational outcomes is informal and evolving; (4) the organization's goal is to facilitate and support individual decision making and development; (5) self-managing individuals and teams will produce an enthusiastic and growing staff; and (6) organizations will experience a transformation, producing outcomes of increased productivity, cooperation, and teamwork. Five components are suggested in an intervention model for the process of decision making and professional development. An outline of possible activities for individual development is accompanied by an outline of possible actions and resources that an organization can use to support individual development. (JD)

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DECISION-MAKING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Focus on the Individual

A Paper Presented at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATES ON INSERVICE EDUCATION

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DECISION MAKING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Recently I noticed a sign that read "Be All You Can Be." The message is familiar. What is being all one can be? How does one realize her highest potential? Does the organization have responsibility to help individuals reach that potential? What is the individual's role? How can being "all you can be" translate into improved quality of schooling and success for all students? What implications does this belief in realizing one's own individual potential have for professional development in school systems?

In the past, the relationship between individual professional growth and organizational productivity has been a source of conflict in our paradigms of staff development and inservice programs for educators. More simply, there was a question of assignment of responsibility for identifying goals for the individual's development--who is responsible? The organization, the individual, or is it a shared responsibility? This tension around decision-making authority in the process of professional development will be reduced if a common systems perspective can be agreed upon. Using a social systems theory perspective, it is recognized that changes suggested for individual development may affect the structures of the central office, the school board, and most important, the delivery of education for all students. Like alterations in the pattern of rules, roles, relationships, and results defined as restructuring schools by Corbett (1990), alterations in the patterns of professional development planning may affect the entire school system. In fact, it is not only this possibility, but the possibility of transformation or moving to a higher order that the current work envisions.

In this paper, a process of decision-making and professional growth will be described as a tool for refocusing on individual growth for professional development and redefining the relationship between professional development and organizational outcomes. First, a brief background will show changes in the way professional development has been defined. Next, individual professional development will be discussed as a focus for decision-making. Third, the components of an intervention process will be introduced and identified. Then, the evaluation of outcomes will be explored. Finally, some predictions about the importance of individual professional development in the future will be presented.

Changing Definitions for Development Efforts

It is useful to recall that, historically, development efforts were viewed as inservice training which was related to the purposes of 1) improving or "tuning" present skills or 2) learning new ways of performing in relation to targeted objectives (Joyce and Showers, 1980). This narrowly focused perspective was broadened to staff development by Dillon-Peterson (1981) as "a process which is designed to foster the personal and professional growth of individuals within a respectful, supportive, positive organizational climate having as its ultimate aim better learning for students and continuous, responsible self-renewal for educators and schools" (p. 3).

A shift toward a broader perspective, practicality, applicability, and involving participants in planning for professional development has come from work on principles of adult learning. Moore (1988) in describing guidelines concerning adult learning suggested that adult learners should be able to define and redefine personal objectives within the context of staff development programs and that these programs should foster decision-making and planning strategies for action.

Individual Professional Development As A Focus For Decision-making

Professional development is viewed as an intervening step in the quest for improvement in the quality of education. It is related to staff performance as a critical variable affecting student performance. In fact, the ultimate goal of professional development is improved quality of education and success for all students. Further, high quality staff development was cited by Guskey (1986) as a central component in nearly every proposal for improving education. Also pointed out was that nearly every major work on the topic of staff development has emphasized the failings of past development efforts (Guskey, 1986). Recently, more individualized, personalized approaches to professional development were suggested by Burke, Christensen, and Fessler (1984) in their work on teacher career cycles. This model suggests that skill building approaches are appropriate during certain stages, but there is a need to go beyond skill building to consider personal and organizational influences that affect career performance and appropriate development activities.

Refocusing on individual professional growth is an intervention aimed at reconceptualizing the linking relationship between staff development and organizational outcomes. The description of that process is the central focus of this paper. It supports the slogan, "Be All You Can Be" and adds another, "If it is to be, it begins with me."

Six key concepts are the foundation of the proposed intervention. These concepts are:

- A clear sense of purpose or mission is the heart of growth and development for both individuals and organizations.
- Individuals need to focus energy toward change and development in order to be more balanced and productive.
- The relationship between individual development and organizational outcomes is loosely-structured, informal, and evolving.

- The organization's goal is to facilitate and support individual decision-making and development.
- Self-managing individuals and self-managing teams can emerge through a process that will produce an enthusiastic and growing staff.
- Organizations will experience a transformation producing outcomes of increased productivity, creativity, cooperation, and teamwork.

Mission or a clear sense of purpose has been identified as a force that will move both individuals and the organization itself toward functioning at higher levels. The centrality of mission or sense of purpose was found by Kiefer and Stroh (1984) to help in achieving higher individual satisfaction and organizational preformance. In fact, they found that people worked together more energetically as part of a larger whole. These synergies have been reported by Kanter (1989) in her recent book, When Giants Learn To Dance, as "the value that comes when the whole adds up to more than the sum of the parts" (p.58).

Professional development encompasses both the personal and professional dimensions. With the increased demands of the workplace in the future as well as in the present, Kanter (1989) noted that not only people's time, but their intellectual and emotional energy are being comsumed by work. She warned that men and women, as well as the organizations in which they work, must find a balance in their work life and personal life in order to produce that which is needed in a world requiring creativity and competition (Kanter, 1989).

Although state departments of education and local school systems establish certification requirements and certain minimum competency standards, most individuals meet or exceed these standards early in their careers. Beyond that, in the quest for increased quality, higher levels

of performance are needed. Therefore, a new relationship between the development of individuals and organizational outcomes is proposed. In this current intervention, as the first component in the process, a method of accountability in establishing professional growth needs and goals is suggested. This method, described by Barkley (1990) suggests that the degree of autonomy in planning for individual professional development should be related to the level of competency at which one's work is performed. Then the relationship should be loosely-structured, informal, and evolving.

Organizational support needs to be provided for all, regardless of level of competency, however, the degree of decision-making authority maintained by the organization or shared with the individual may be associated with performance and the professional development planning process. Consistent with this view of sharing the decision-making and professional development planning process are changing roles of individuals and the organization. Individuals may assume increased leadership and decision-making roles while organizational roles need to be more facilitating and supporting of individual professional development decisions and options.

Paradigms of schools need to be reframed to define the fundamental concerns of students, staff, and society for the future. Kanter (1989) calls for the creation of a marriage between entrepreneurial creativity and corporate discipline, cooperation, and teamwork. The current intervention predicts that organizational changes in professional development planning will result in increased quality, productivity, and motivation.

Components Of An Intervention To Focus On Individual Professional Development

Five components are suggested as an intervention in the process of

decision-making and professional development. They will represent a developmental approach toward a new view of the linking relationship between staff development and organizational outcomes. The first component of the intervention is a decision-making and professional development continuum. This suggests that there is a continuum for decision-making authority in developing professional development plans.

Continuum for Sharing Decision-making in Professional Development Planning.

Steven Barkley (1990) suggested that there is a continuum for decision-making authority roles in planning professional development. That is, the degree to which decision-making is shared by the individual and the supervisor is determined by the level of competency of performance. For example, individuals at the induction level would have to meet minimum competency evaluation standards as prescribed by the school system. They, or others who are not performing satisfactorily regardless of their years of experience, would have few, if any, options in choosing goals for professional development. Others who have met these competency requirements would have increasing autonomy in the decision-making process and increasing freedom to choose professional development options. This is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Continuum for Sharing Decision-making Roles in Developing Professional Development Plans

Competency Performance Level	Not Satisfactory	Satisfactory Growing	Highly Effective
Shared Decision-making Level	Supervisor retains decision-making	Supervisor and individual share the decision-making authority	Individual is empowered with decision-making authority

Examples of behaviors identified on the Continuum for Sharing Decision-making Roles in Developing Professional Development Plans have been illustrated in Figure 2. Behaviors in Shared Decision-making for Professional Development.

Figure 2. Behaviors in Shared Decision-making for Professional Development

Shared Decision-making Level	Not Satisfactory	Satisfactory Growing	Highly Effective
	°Supervisor directs content of development plans	°Individual identifies areas for development °Supervisor relinquishes authority to dictate content of plans °Individual and supervisor agree on growth plans °Supervisor supports individual development plans	°Individual empowered to identify content of plans without product outcome °Supervisor supports development plans

Growth Effectiveness Model

The second component is a model to identify elements needed in order for an individual to direct his energy toward change and development. The elements center around a mission or sense of purpose necessary to provide the inner strength, commitment, or spirit to move to a higher level of development. Commonality of mission or sense of purpose has been identified as being central to accomplishing a paradigm shift of the organization as "instrumental" to one of the organization as "sacred" or providing work that is intrinsically valuable and personally meaningful (Yankelovich, 1981).

Other elements in the Growth Effectiveness Model (GEM) are viewed as intrinsic to the individual and part of the flow of energy which guides movement toward change and growth. These three elements include vision, values, and motivation.

Vision, as a driving force, may be described as the ideal. It embodies one's highest values and aspirations. It inspires people to reach for what could be and to rise above their fears and preoccupations with current reality (Berlew, 1974). The second intrinsic element which flows together to energize an individual toward growth is one's values. Values are principles or qualities which are highly regarded. Values are significant underlying factors affecting one's perception and judgements. Motivation, also an intrinsic element, includes the incentives which stimulate action. It implies a process of motion and change.

Three additional elements of the Growth Effectiveness Model are external, but interactive with the individual. They are support systems, appraisal processes and tools, and challenges of global and diverse world views. Support systems include a wide variety of meanings including human relationships and interactions-both formal and informal; resources in the form of programs, funds, and personnel to assist individual development and processes and structures which may include coaching or mentoring arrangements, internship experiences, employee involvement initiatives, and task forces.

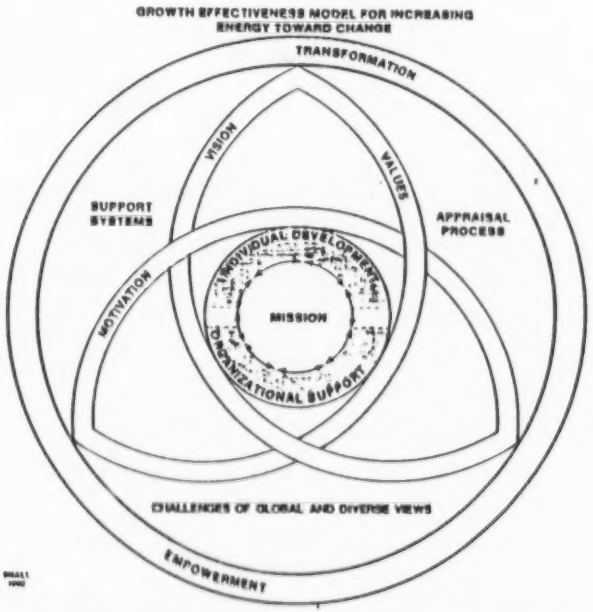
Appraisal processes are important elements for individuals to use in discovering their strengths, needs, and goals. These processes and the accompanying tools include, but are not limited to the organization's standards of performance. Other valuable appraisal processes are personal

reflection and meditation, developmental needs inventories, assessment centers, self-inventories of leadership behaviors, conflict management styles, career cycles, communication styles, and others. Informal appraisal processes in the form of conversations with colleagues, family members, and friends are important in moving toward growth.

Challenges of global and diverse world views make up the third external element that contributes to the movement of an individual toward growth and development. Usually organizations and many people can accommodate only one world view (Nicoll, 1984). Yet with the shrinking of the world, challenges are present to see more than one side of a conflict and seek synthesis. As we seek to increase the flow of energy toward change, it is important to interact with the challenges of global and diverse world views.

A visual representation of the interaction of elements that increase energy toward change, growth and development is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3



Empowerment, or the ability to create what one wants to create, is a critical factor in personal satisfaction and organizational effectiveness (Kanter, 1977). Being empowered is being free to use internal energy and to act at higher levels of performance. This state and the transformation or renewal of an individual is observed as growth and development occur. As shown in Figure 3, Growth Effectiveness Model For Increasing Energy Toward Change, transformation and empowerment are expected in individuals when the other elements are in movement toward growth and development around a clear sense of purpose or mission.

Options for Individual Development

Options for Individual Development make up the third component of the intervention process to refocus on individual professional development. In this stage, the person makes decisions about his course of action for professional development activities. Five categories are included and, while categories are not in lock-step, sequential order, the arrangement of the categories has a general direction.

The categories and possible activities are outlined as follows:

I. Identify individual needs for development
   - A. Minimum competency requirements
   - B. Self-inventory
   - C. Assessment Centers
   - D. Self-discovery tools/workshops
   - E. Observations of colleagues, family, friends
   - F. Others, as desired

II. Select from university model
   - A. Attend or teach college classes

B. Conduct research

C. Provide community service

III. Attend or conduct seminars or workshops

A. Gain knowledge or skills

B. Make impact on others

IV. Schedule self-directed study for wholeness

A. Travel

B. Wellness activities

C. Reading

D. Spiritual development

E. Writing for publication or pleasure

V. Application Activities

A. Internship experiences

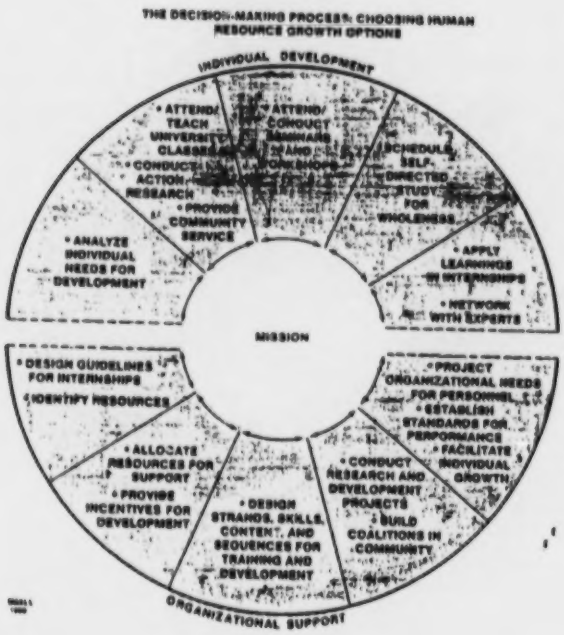
B. Network with experts

C. Coaching/Mentoring Partnerships

The categories and activities listed are suggestions for, but not limitations on, options available to individuals. They are illustrated in Figure 4, The Decision-making Process: Choosing Human Resource Growth Options. The options for individual development also have mission at their heart. This figure fits in the center of the Growth Effectiveness Model to emphasize that the decisions made around professional development options effect the energy flow and movement toward empowerment and transformation.

Organizational supports also are illustrated in Figure 4. They are arranged to correspond with each of the option categories. These support activities are positioned under the category with which they are matched to show the supportive, facilitating role of the organization.

Figure 4


THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: CHOOSING HUMAN RESOURCE GROWTH OPTIONS
INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT
• ATTEND/ TEACH UNIVERSITY CLASSES
• CONDUCT ACTION RESEARCH
• PROVIDE COMMUNITY SERVICE
• ATTEND/ CONDUCT SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS
• SCHEDULE SELF-DIRECTED STUDY FOR WHOLENESS
• APPLY LEARNINGS IN INTERNSHIPS
• NETWORK WITH EXPERTS
• ANALYZE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS FOR DEVELOPMENT
MISSION
• DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR INTERNSHIPS
• IDENTIFY RESOURCES
• ALLOCATE RESOURCES FOR SUPPORT
• PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT
• DESIGN STRANDS, SKILLS, CONTENT, AND SEQUENCES FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
• CONDUCT RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
• BUILD COALITIONS IN COMMUNITY
• PROJECT ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS FOR PERSONNEL
• ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR PERFORMANCE
• FACILITATE INDIVIDUAL GROWTH
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Organizational Support

Organizational Support is the fourth component in the development of new ways to perceive the roles and relationships between individuals and central office in the decision-making and professional development process. Five categories to correspond with the five Options For Professional Development have been identified and will be outlined. The role of the central office representative is to facilitate and support the individual in his quest for development and quality. The relationship between the individual development options selected by persons and the outcomes that result from such activities is to be loosely structured, informal, and evolving. It is through the commonality of mission and the interactions experienced in support system arrangements that the relationships will be forged and strengthened. Interactions between individuals who are creating

their professional development plans and central office staff may be coaching sessions, internship experiences, workshops, other informal interactions, or more formal supervisory conferences or vertical teams created for a specific purpose. Thus, these interactions can be building levels of trust in each other as individuals and trust in the process of education and individual development itself.

The categories of organizational support and possible actions are outlined below:

I. Personnel Management and Development Actions
   - A. Project personnel needs
   - B. Generate position descriptions
   - C. Establish standards for performance
   - D. Develop an appraisal process
   - E. Facilitate individual growth

II. Research and Development
   - A. Conduct and support research and development
   - B. Build coalitions in communities, universities

III. Provide inservice training and development
   - A. Develop strands for training
   - B. Identify skills and content for positions
   - C. Suggest sequences for training and development
   - D. Provide for external attendance at events

IV. Resources and Structures for support
   - A. Allocate funds and time for support services
   - B. Provide incentives for development

V. Application Activities

A. Design internship experiences

B. Identify and secure resources

Celebrating Outcomes to the Organization

The fifth component of the intervention to link individual professional development to organizational outcomes in a new way is to celebrate the expected outcomes. Without recognition of the slow and limited success of incremental change efforts like "total quality" and "continuous improvement," organizations may not want to entertain the installation of a fast-tracking approach, or one that involves the conscious acceleration of the transformative process.

The most significant way to enlist organizational support is to show the expected benefits of the transformative process and to celebrate when indicators of the process are observed. Lawrence de Bivort (1984) suggested that transformation requires some basic structural and procedural changes, movement marking development from a lower order to higher order, and breaking through existing belief systems.

Expectations of the currently proposed intervention are consistent with those found in the recent business and leadership literature, that is, individuals want to do good work and they will do good work (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Kanter, 1989). They are more literally "on their own" and have to feel good about what they produce and rely on the power of their own ideas.

Results or benefits to the organization were identified by de Bivort (1984) to be "radical enhancements of the basic capabilities of the organization, particularly in the areas of:

°access to and use of energy and/or material resources

°productivity, or the ability to aggregate resources

°generation and use of information

°creativity, or the ability to pursue alternative development strategies" (p.245).

Other outcomes of an organizational transformation are 1)alignment or linkage with larger systems than in the past and 2)observed characteristics of:

°strong vision and development capabilities

°a sense of things being out of control

°a combination of both (de Bivort, 1984).

The organizations outcomes may be observed in:

°More and better ideas

°Increased numbers of staff involved in teaching college classes/workshops

°Additional post-graduate degrees or research studies

°Reduced number of individuals on sick leave

°Reduction in needed supervisory time

°Time saved in decision-making

°Increased numbers of staff seeking to use support systems/incentives

°Risk-taking and innovation viewed as the norm

°Voluntary requests for leadership opportunities

°Reduced cost for management/administration

°Increased analysis of the work itself

°Higher standards of performance

°Increased teamwork

°Rising above "turf battles"

°Synergies achieved

°New allies and coalitions

°Changing position requirements

°More knowledgeable and skilled individuals

°More time spent serving students, parents, community

Celebrating these outcomes can be accomplished in a simple, but effective way. The familiar management tool, MBWA--Management by Wandering Around, is a key concept. The most obvious way to evaluate and celebrate the outcomes of the intervention is to observe them...look around and listen to what people are saying. This is celebrating the outcomes.

This type of celebration was recognized by Peters and Waterman (1984) who found that the informal environments and rich, informal communications mark the "name of the successful game". They further found the by-product to be that "informal communication lead to more action, more experiments, more learning and simultaneously the ability to stay better in touch and on top of things"(Peters and Waterman, 1984, p. 124).

Approaching outcomes by expecting, observing, and celebrating them assumes that the organization's leaders know what to look and listen for. Yet this is easy to achieve...they look for the actions and outcomes which are a part of the mission and guides both the individuals and the organization itself.

The current component, Celebrating Outcomes to the Organization, has five phases for working with the organization's leaders to initiate the decision-making and individual development planning process.

These phases are:

1. Familiarization, using upper level management human resource personnel, and outside experts to explain the need for improvement
2. Team Building, initiating networks and teams to provide a visible structure for the new process
3. Training/Coaching, using teams of people who have been using the individual development planning process to facilitate and support others while building synergies

4. Developing Commitment, by examining the process and analyzing and celebrating outcomes.

5. An Interactive Planning Alternative, using vertical teams throughout the organization as a routine matter to plan and integrate the plans in a holistic way toward the mission.

These five phases were adapted from the work of Roth (1989) who suggested that a comprehensive intervention process would need to include these phases if long lasting transformation was to occur.

Evaluations and Predictions for Decision-Making and Professional Development

In evaluating the intervention being proposed, it is useful to refer to the work of Kiefer and Stroh (1984) as they examined developing new paradigms in organizations. They found it was possible to achieve the highest in both individual satisfaction and organizational performance. Instead of exchanging personal identities for an organizational identity, individuals were able to expand or transform their personal identities. "Personal identities are inextricably linked to a higher purpose to which they have committed their organizational selves" (Kiefer and Stroh, 1984, p. 171). Individuals expand and move to higher levels when their sense of purpose is in tune with the organization's sense of purpose or mission. Simply put, people want to grow and to do good work.

The future direction of professional development as a shared decision-making process is uncertain, but it is certain that education and retraining will be priorities in all lines of work. Kanter (1989) commented that "if an educated workforce has been America's number one asset in the past, it is even more critical in a rapidly changing world"(p.365). The individual skills predicted by Kanter to be required to manage a career in the future

are the same skills developing from the Growth Effectiveness Model:

- "A belief in self rather than in the power of a position alone
- The ability to collaborate and become connected with new teams in various ways
- Commitment to the intrinsic excitement of achievement in a particular project that can show results
- The willingness to keep learning" (Kanter, 1989, p. 365).

The process of decision-making and professional growth, as an intervention to transform both the individual and the organizations where they work, suggests that the individual will need to take responsibility for her growth and development. The goal is to develop self-managing individuals who will become parts of self-managing teams and rise to a higher level of functioning, both personally and professionally.

The new relationship will be one of mutually beneficial interdependence between the individual and the organization working toward a common mission. In other words, to "Be All You Can Be" requires the other slogan, "If it is to be, it's up to me."

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